



The Clark Chronicle

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Photo by Dean Koltz

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From the Chair...

Welcome to the winter edition of the Clark Chronicle! I want to wrap up a few "end of the season" things. First - a big thank you to several people and businesses that donated time and/or products. And that would be Helena Zera and Rob Oley along with Gannon's Ice Cream and Byrne Dairy! Thank you for all you've done to help Friends of Clark Reservation.

Going along with that - here are the figures for attendance: 61 attendees to summer programs. And we had a total of 1,280 visitors to the Nature Center! (837 adults and 443 children)



In this newsletter, you will see that we have a new logo. We felt we should have a new logo to go along with our new name. "Friends of Clark Reservation State Park" - obvious, that's who we are. The rocks at the bottom represent the geology that Clark is known for. The fern is the Hart's Tongue Fern, one of the rarest and most endangered ferns in the United States. 94% of the Hart's Tongue Fern NYS population are found at Clark Reservation and Chittenango Falls!

Remember that Clark Reservation is open year round for hiking! Dress appropriately and join us on a sunny, snowy day!

*Tina Redmond, Chair
Friends of Clark Reservation*

New Web Site!

Along with our name change (to Friends of Clark Reservation), we have a new website as well. It can be found at <http://www.friendsofclarkreservation.org>. Much thanks to board member Karen Sheckells for all her hard work!

We are still making adjustments, so please visit us online and see what you think; your feedback is welcome and encouraged!





*Old-growth chestnuts, Great Smokey Mts,
NC circa 1910*

(Forest History Society)

The Lost Giant of the Forest

*by Angela Weiler
Clark Native Plant garden*

Imagine a northeastern forest filled with a native species of tree that challenges the largest in height and girth (to 100' tall and 10 feet wide). Imagine that this species of tree is the predominant species, comprising 25% of all tree species between Maine and Georgia. The tree is also highly valuable commercially, is unparalleled for rot resistance, and has many uses including furniture, fences, home construction, and telephone poles, all without having to be treated. The nuts of this tree provide nutritious food for wildlife and humans, and are often found "roasting on an open fire" in the winter time. This was the American Chestnut at the turn of the 20th century, before the chestnut blight struck. The fungus killed billions of trees within a few decades. Today isolated American chestnuts can still be found in the northeast, but they are few and usually succumb to the virus within 10 years or so.

The good news is that the the American Chestnut Research & Restoration Project at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry has been working to develop a blight-resistant American chestnut tree. They have now isolated a single wheat gene which produces an enzyme (oxalate oxidase (OxO)) which stops the fungus from forming the deadly cankers. This year the researchers applied for USDA approval, which could take several years, and then they will begin distributing 10,000 blight-resistant American chestnut trees. For further information on tree distribution, go to <https://www.esf.edu/chestnut/funding.htm> (right side).



Have You Seen Me?

*by Dean Kolts
Friends Board Member*

Whoo, Whoo. Who are the stealth pilots of the forest? Many times we've heard the flapping of crow's wings, or the whooshing of Canada geese as they fly overhead, but owls are able to fly silently. How?

They have broad circular wings enabling them to glide easily without much flapping. Bird wings create turbulence when air passes over them. That's what makes the noise, but the leading edge of owl's wings are serrated, like a comb. This breaks down the air flow into what's known as "microturbulences", resulting in silent flight. They can fly low to the ground and their prey won't hear them.

Owls also have excellent hearing. Their flat faces have feathers arranged that funnel sound toward their ears. Many species have skulls that aren't symmetrical, so that one ear cavity is placed slightly in front of the other. That means they can hear in stereo, making it easier to pinpoint prey.

It's well-known they have very acute eyesight. They don't really have "eyeballs" because their eyes are more tube shaped, so they can't move their eyes, and have to turn their heads to see to the side. Rod cells in the retina process light, while cone cells detect color. The ratio of rods and cones in their eyes is very different than humans. Owls have many more rods than cones which enable them to see extremely well in the dark.

All these features combined make owls very efficient hunters.



This Barred Owl was looking for dinner along the Mildred Faust trail on a snowy November evening.

Creating Clark Reservation

by Angela Weiler
Clark Native Plant garden

KAI-YAH-KOO,
OR
GREEN LAKE PARK.
JUST THE PLACE FOR
PIG-NIG PARTIES & SUNDAY SCHOOL EXCURSIONS
One mile west of Jamesville on the
D. L. & W. R. R.
PHOTOGRAPHED AND PUBLISHED BY
W. D. GATES, - - - Watkins, N. Y.
It was opened as a Summer Resort, July 4th, 1879, and has
already been visited by thousands of persons, all of whom have
been astonished to find so beautiful and wonderful a place so
near Syracuse.
THE LAKE AFFORDS BOATING, FISHING, SWIMMING, BATHS,
AND A MINERAL SPRING.
It only takes half an hour to go from Syracuse, and about
an hour to go from Homer or Cortland. It is the most access-
ible and cheapest place in the country, and the best on the
D. L. & W. R. R. The place is 500 ft above Syracuse; it is new
and clean, the air is pure, the water is good and the scenery
is delightful.
I. G. MACFARLANE, - - LESSEE.
Jamesville, N. Y.

A flyer for "Green Lake Park", a private resort
located at the present site of Clark
Reservation in the late 19th century

Early in U.S. history, the site of what is now Clark Reservation was federal land, as was much of central New York. At the time, parcels of federal land were awarded to returning Revolutionary War soldiers in return for their service. Being so rocky and uneven, the site was unfit for farming and was eventually sold to a series of private owners. At one point it was even turned into a summer resort for a few years, when it was known as "Green Lake Park".

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Mary Clark Thompson and her husband were prominent philanthropists. (Their summer home is now Sonnenberg Gardens State Park in Canandaigua.) Mary was familiar with the grandeur and scientific significance of the

Clark Reservation area, and she was also familiar with the activities of local mining interests. Solvay Process had already purchased and decimated nearby Blue Lake, a much smaller glacial plunge pool, despite public outcry.

Thompson purchased about 100 acres of the current park land in 1915 and gave it to New York state to protect. It was named Clark Reservation in memory of her father, Myron H. Clark (governor of New York from 1855 to 1856). The donated property included both the falls site and the lake, and it became a state park in 1925 with the birth of the New York State Park system. A year later, another 250 acres was added to the park lands.

Winter Wildlife Viewing:

from the NYS Dept of Environmental Conservation

Winter is a great time to get outdoors and observe birds and other wildlife. Unfortunately, some birders, in their enthusiasm to photograph the birds up close, may approach the birds and flush them, causing them to fly. This can deplete the birds' energy reserves, and in extreme cases, can even cause death. It is better to observe wildlife in a manner that is safe for both you and wildlife.

To view wildlife safely, view them from a distance using binoculars; stay on trails; enter private property only with permission; and park in designated spots or completely off the road.

Check out more wildlife watching tips at:
<http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/112582.html>



Father's Day Hike

by Tina Redmond
Council of Park Friends - Chair

We had a beautiful, sunny day for our annual Father's Day Hike! Our usual presenter was unable to lead this year but luckily for us Mike Serviss Conservation Project Coordinator stepped in to save us! He led the 13 of us around showing us many of the ferns in Clark Reservation. There are about 90 species of ferns identified in New York State. Of those, about 50 occur in Onondaga County with about 30 in Clark Reservation!

My favorite one was the Bulblet fern. It reproduces with spores like every other fern but in addition to that, it grows little green bulblets on the underside of the fronds! They drop in late summer and can grow into a new fern. We had a lovely time; remember to put this on your calendar for next year!



Friends of Clark Reservation
Clark Reservation State Park
6105 E Seneca Tpke, Jamesville, NY 13078

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<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/22-2305347>

Mark your calendar now!

Saturday, May 4, 2019: I Love My Park Day

Saturday, June 1: National Trails Day

Sunday, June 16: Father's Day Hike



Current event details always available at

<https://www.meetup.com/Clark-Reservation-Meetup-Group/>
and <https://www.facebook.com/pg/NatureCenterCPF/events/>

“There is just as much beauty visible to us in the landscape as we are prepared to appreciate...”

Henry David Thoreau